THE CHILLING ARCHIVES OF HORROR COMICS!™

HAUNTED HORROR™

#28

TOXIC TOMMY

INSIDE:

THE DAY THE WORLD DIED!

THE CORPSE CAME TO DINNER!

LAND OF THE LIVING DEAD!

AND MORE!

Special Guest Host

Toxic Tommy

GRITTINGS, *RABID READERS!* THOSE *PUTRID POSERS,* THE TERROR-TRIO *MADAM CLIZIA, MR. KARSWELL,* AND *FORELOCK THE WARLOCK,* HAVE GONE HAUNTING! *BAD RIDDANCE* TO THEM! THOSE *LOATHSOME LUNATICS* WOULDN'T KNOW A *GOOD TERROR TALE* IF IT BIT THEM ON THE NECK! I AM NOW SEIZING CONTROL OF THIS *RANCID RAG!*
THE *MONSTER-OUS MASTERPIECES* I HAVE CHOSEN FOR YOU, BOILS AND GHOULS, WILL MELT YOUR *FACE* AT A *PETRIFYING PACE!* THIS ISSUE OF *HAUNTED HORROR* IS A *SHRIEK SHOWCASE* UNLIKE ANY OTHER THAT YOU HAVE PUT YOUR *CRUSTY CLAWS* ON!
AT LAST, WITH THOSE *HORRENDOUS HOSTS* DOING A DISAPPEARING ACT, YOU, *GOOD FIENDS,* NOW CAN DEVOUR *CADAVER-FILLED COMICS* THAT ARE WAY *TOMB-MUCH!*

Toxic Tommy illustration by Markee Shadows.

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On the cover, *Eerie* #9, October – November 1952. Artist: Sid Check. Avon.

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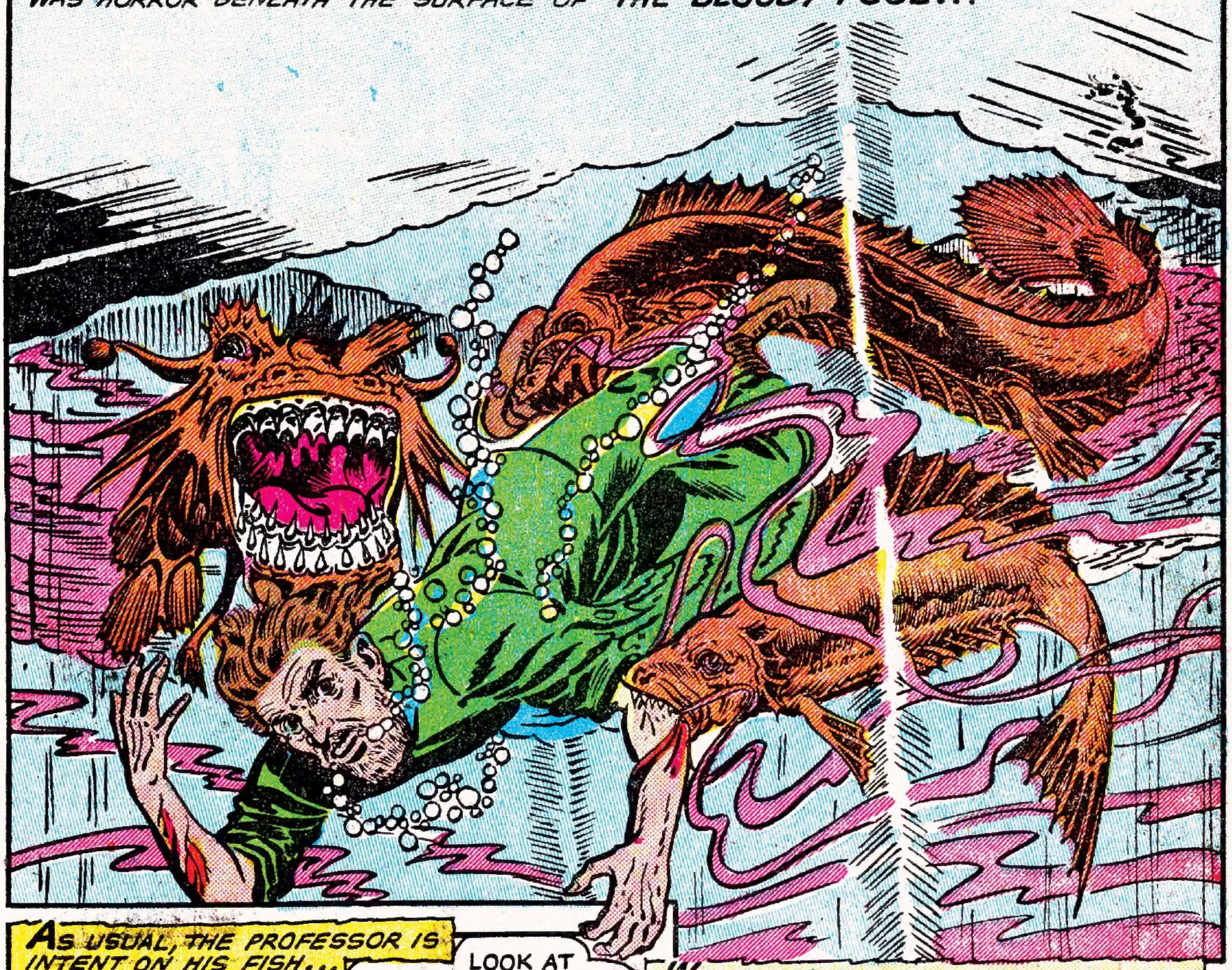
The AVENGING CORPSE

PROFESSOR LORING WAS AN EXPERT ON TROPICAL FISH — BUT WHEN IT CAME TO LOVE, HE WAS THE BIGGEST FISH OF ALL! HE WAS SO INTERESTED IN WHAT WENT ON IN THE HUGE GLASS TANKS OF HIS AQUARIUM, THAT HE LOST HIS WIFE AND, ALMOST, HIS LIFE! ON THAT TERRIBLE DAY THE **CANNIBAL FISH** WERE WELL FED, AND THERE WAS HORROR BENEATH THE SURFACE OF **THE BLOODY POOL...**



AS USUAL, THE PROFESSOR IS INTENT ON HIS FISH...

LOOK AT THE BEAUTIES! AS FIERCE AS TIGERS — AN ENTIRELY NEW BREED OF BARRACUDA, RAISED ON RAW MEAT!

WHILE HANK THOMAS, AN ASSISTANT, HAS OTHER INTERESTS — NAMELY IDA, THE PROFESSOR'S BEAUTIFUL WIFE...

LOOK AT THE OLD FOOL AND HIS FISH! DO YOU KNOW WHAT I'M THINKING, IDA?

I T-THINK SO! WHY DON'T YOU DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT?

Mysteries Weird and Strange #3, September 1953. Artist unknown. Superior Publishers.

HERE YOU ARE MY LOVELIES! ANOTHER CHUNK OF MEAT, AND THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY! BUT DON'T WORRY—I WON'T LET YOU STARVE!

IT WOULD BE SO EASY! THE FISH ARE RAVENOUS, THEY WOULD TEAR HIM TO PIECES IN A MINUTE!

DO IT, HANK! WE'LL NEVER HAVE ANOTHER CHANCE LIKE THIS!

I K-KNOW! BUT IT'S M-MURDER, AND THEY HANG YOU FOR THAT! WHAT IF WE GET CAUGHT?

DON'T BE A FOOL! IT WILL LOOK LIKE AN ACCIDENT! HE JUST SLIPPED AND FELL IN—WE CAN FIND THE BODY LATER, MUCH LATER!

SO HANK TAKES THE FATAL STEP... ONE LITTLE PUSH...

SHOVE HIM!

THERE, OLD MAN! NOW YOU CAN FEED THE FISH!

YOWWW—

EYIIII—HELP! THEY'RE TEARING ME APART! AAAAAAAAAAAA—

OH—I—I DIDN'T KNOW IT WOULD BE SO HORRIBLE! ALL THE B-BLOOD! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

CUT IT OUT, IDA! REMEMBER IT WAS YOUR IDEA, SO DON'T GO SOFT ON ME NOW! WE'VE GOT THINGS TO DO!

LET'S GET OUT OF THE HOUSE, FAR AWAY FROM THIS PLACE! WE'VE GOT TO SET UP AN ALIBI!

NOW YOU'RE TALKING! WE'LL COOK UP A STORY THAT WILL SATISFY THE COPS!

BUT BY SOME STRANGE MIRACLE...

THE F-FISH! L-LEAVING ME! AND I'M STILL ALIVE—NOW IF I CAN GET OUT OF THE POOL SOMEHOW!

THE FISH, MADDENED BY BLOOD, TURN ON EACH OTHER..

F-FIGHTING AMONG THEMSELVES! TEARING EACH OTHER TO BITS! I'VE GOT A CHANCE!

PAINFULLY, HIS BODY TORN IN A DOZEN PLACES, THE PROFESSOR MANAGES TO STRUGGLE FROM THE POOL...

G-GOING TO MAKE IT! NOW IF I DON'T BLEED TO DEATH, AND IF I CAN SAVE MYSELF, I'LL GET **THEM!** SOMEHOW, SOME WAY, I'LL GET HANK AND IDA! I SWEAR IT!

BUT FIRST I MUST GET HELP! GET TO A HOSPITAL—MAYBE THEY CAN SAVE ME! OHH— THE HORRIBLE PAIN!

THE MAID, THE OTHER SERVANTS, WHERE IS EVERYBODY? MUST I BLEED TO DEATH IN SIGHT OF MY OWN HOUSE? ***HELP!*** WON'T SOMEONE PLEASE HELP ME?

I WON'T DIE! I WON'T! I'VE GOT TO LIVE AT LEAST LONG ENOUGH TO HAVE MY REVENGE! TO MAKE THEM SUFFER AS I HAVE SUFFERED! ***I MUST NOT DIE!***

SUDDENLY...

THE MAID! YOU... HELP ME! DON'T LET ME DIE!

EEEEEE—

Y-YOUR FACE!

OUT OF MY WAY, THEN, YOU FOOL! I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP! I'LL LIVE, I'LL BEAT THEM! THEY— (CHUCKLE) — THINK I'M DEAD IN THAT POOL!

POOR MAN! HE'S OUT OF HIS HEAD! BUT WHERE DID HE GET ALL THOSE TERRIBLE WOUNDS!

WHILE UPSTAIRS, THE PROFESSOR FLINGS OPEN THE DOOR OF HIS WIFE'S ROOM...

IDA! YOU — HUH! N-NOT HERE! AND HER THINGS, ALL G-GONE!

SO THAT'S IT! THEY'VE RUN AWAY TOGETHER, WAITING FOR THE POLICE TO NOTIFY THEM OF MY DEATH! WELL, THEY'RE IN FOR A SURPRISE! I'VE GOT A FEELING I'M GOING TO MAKE IT NOW!

THE PROFESSOR — GETTING INTO HIS CAR! B-BLEEDING ALL OVER THE PLACE! HE'LL NEVER MAKE IT TO THE HOSPITAL, NOT IN HIS CONDITION! UGH!

BUT PROFESSOR LORING IS DETERMINED TO FOOL THEM ALL...

HEY, BUDDY! DON'T YOU KNOW WHAT A RED LIGHT — YOWW — WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?

OUT OF MY WAY, OFFICER! I MUST GET TO A HOSPITAL!

SOON...

HEY, LOOK AT HIM!

H-HELP ME, YOU FOOLS! DON'T JUST STAND THERE! GET ME TO A BED — AND I NEED AN IMMEDIATE BLOOD TRANSFUSION!

A WALKING CORPSE!

EEEEEE-

THREE MONTHS PASS AS THE PROFESSOR NURSES HIS WOUNDS AND HIS SAVAGE HATRED...

WELL, SIR, THIS IS THE DAY WE TAKE OFF THE BANDAGES!

GET ON WITH IT, MAN!

REMEMBER, PROFESSOR, YOU'RE NOT TO EXPECT TOO MUCH! EVEN PLASTIC SURGERY CAN'T WORK MIRACLES! AND THERE WAS HARDLY ENOUGH OF YOUR FACE LEFT TO HOLD A GRAFT!

UGH—I SEE WHAT YOU MEAN! BUT I'VE ALREADY HAD MY MIRACLE— I'M ALIVE!

SOON...

HAH—HAH! IDA SEEMS TO HAVE COME DOWN IN THE WORLD! NATURALLY, BECAUSE WHEN I DIDN'T DIE, SHE COULDN'T GET MY MONEY...

MORE WEEKS PASS, THEN MONTHS, BUT LORING NEVER FALTERS IN HIS GRIM SEARCH...

AT LAST A REAL LEAD ON IDA! SHE'S LIVING IN A CHEAP ROOMING HOUSE IN COAST CITY—ALONE! AND TONIGHT I'LL BE SEEING HER!

BUT LORING, TOO, IS SURPRISED...

WELL, IDA, HERE WE ARE AT LAST! IN A MOMENT WE'LL BE FACE TO FACE— HAH, I WONDER IF SHE'LL KNOW ME? WITH THIS HORROR OF A FACE ***SHE*** HELPED GIVE ME! COME ON, MY DEAR, OPEN UP! THIS IS ***FATE*** YOU HEAR KNOCKING!

HELLO—ER, I'M LOOKING FOR SOMEONE ELSE, A WOMAN NAMED IDA LORING! DO YOU KNOW...

I ***AM*** IDA LORING! WHO—UGH—ARE YOU? OH! OH, NO! NOT...!

LATER, AFTER MUTUAL RECOGNITION...

HA-HA-HA! A GRIM JOKE ON BOTH OF US, MY DEAR HUSBAND! I'M SICK, DYING, AND YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD!

WHERE'S HANK THOMAS? I DEMAND YOU TELL ME!

GLAD TO! HANK LEFT ME WHEN I GOT SICK, AND I HAD NO MONEY! YOU RUINED EVERYTHING WHEN YOU REFUSED TO DIE IN THAT FISH TANK! BUT I DON'T CARE NOW— I JUST WANT YOU TO FIND HIM AND DESTROY HIM!

PLEASE TAKE ME WITH YOU, TAKE ME OUT OF THIS PLACE! I'LL HELP YOU FIND HANK— HE'S IN MIAMI WITH A RICH WOMAN, SYLVIA DOWNS! I HATE HIM NOW AS MUCH AS YOU DO!

NOT A CHANCE, IDA! TOO LATE!

GOODBYE! I WAS GOING TO KILL YOU, BUT NOW THAT WON'T BE NECESSARY! YOU'LL DIE SOON ENOUGH, AFTER TERRIBLE SUFFERING! HA-HA—NOW ALL I HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT IS GETTING HANK!

OH, PLEASE! HAVE MERCY ON ME! DON'T LEAVE ME HERE TO DIE ALONE!

THAT SAME NIGHT...

SO HANK HAS FOUND A NEW LOVE, EH? SYLVIA DOWNS! I SHOULDN'T HAVE TOO MUCH TROUBLE FINDING HER—AND HANK!

WHILE BACK IN COAST CITY, IDA TAKES THE EASY WAY OUT...

I MIGHT AS WELL DRINK THIS—POISON! I'M SICK, MY LIFE WASTED, ALL BECAUSE OF A MAN! I ONLY HOPE MY HUSBAND GETS HIM, TOO!

A FEW NIGHTS LATER IN MIAMI, AT THE LARGE ESTATE OF SYLVIA DOWNB...

WATCH THIS DIVE, SYLVIA! A FULL GAINER WITH A FLIP OVER! A REAL TOUGH ONE!

OH, HANK, YOU'RE SO STRONG AND ATHLETIC! I ADORE YOU—AND MAYBE I WILL MARRY YOU AFTER ALL!

BUT AS THE UNSUSPECTING HANK GOES DEEP INTO THE POOL...

H-HUH! WHAT'S THAT? WHO? LIKE A F-FROGMAN!

THE STRANGE CREATURE SEIZES HIM AND TAKES HIM TO THE BOTTOM IN AN IRON GRIP...

TERRIFIED, HANK? KNOW WHAT IS GOING TO HAPPEN TO YOU? RECOGNIZE ME FOR WHAT I AM— YOUR DEATH!

A SLOW AND TERRIBLE DEATH, HANK! WORSE EVEN THAN BEING TORN TO PIECES BY FISH! HAH-HAH! WHILE YOUR LADY WAITS UP THERE, YOU'RE **DYING** DOWN HERE!

THE PANIC-STRICKEN GIRL CALLS THE POLICE...

HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN UNDER, MISS?

A L-LONG TIME! I, OH, I'M SO FRIGHTENED! PLEASE HELP ME!

AND WHEN THE BODY IS FOUND—SOMETHING ELSE IS ALSO FOUND...

A FROGMAN'S OUTFIT, BILL! A MAN COULD STAY UNDER WATER FOR HOURS! HOW DO YOU FIGURE IT?

BEATS ME! NOBODY ELSE WAS SEEN!

AT THAT MOMENT, IN A HOTEL ROOM NOT FAR AWAY...

MY JOB IS DONE! NOW I'LL JUST PULL THE TRIGGER AND RID THE WORLD OF THIS FACE OF MINE!

THE END

The CORPSE CAME TO DINNER

IF HAVING TWO WIVES MAKES A MAN A BIGAMIST—THEN HARRY GREEN WAS A BIGAMIST! BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE WAS ENTIRELY INNOCENT! PUZZLE? NOT IF YOU KNEW THAT ONE WIFE WAS A PHANTOM, A WEIRD AND TERRIBLE BEING COME BACK FROM THE GRAVE TO HAUNT HER FORMER HUSBAND! BUT HIS PROBLEM WAS WHAT TO DO WITH THE UNWELCOME GUEST IN THE HAUNTED COTTAGE—BECAUSE THERE WERE THREE IN A SHROUD...

IN A GRAVEYARD NEAR THE HOME OF HARRY GREEN, THERE IS A HORRIBLE STIRRING IN THE DAMP EARTH! A GRAVE CRACKS OPEN...

I MUST FIND HARRY! I WILL GO TO HIM! HE MADE ME A PROMISE AND HE'S BROKEN IT!

HOW I REMEMBER THIS PATH! WE USED TO STROLL HERE TOGETHER WHEN I WAS ALIVE! BUT HE PROMISED ME THAT, IF I DIED, HE WOULD NEVER MARRY AGAIN! BUT HE DID—HE DID!

Strange Fantasy #13, August – September 1954. Art: Iger Shop. Farrell.

SOON THE GRISLY FIGURE OF THE CORPSE-WOMAN APPROACHES A LARGE COTTAGE THAT STANDS AT THE END OF A LANE...

HE IS IN THERE NOW WITH THAT WOMAN— WITH HIS NEW WIFE! HEE-HEE—HOW SURPRISED HE'S GOING TO BE WHEN HE SEES THAT I'VE COME BACK FROM THE GRAVE!

WHILE INSIDE, COZY BY THE FIRE, WHILE OUTSIDE THE NIGHT IS DANK AND THE WIND HOWLS LIKE A HUGE WOLF...

I FEEL SO NERVOUS TONIGHT, HARRY! AS IF SOMETHING TERRIBLE WERE GOING TO HAPPEN! AND THAT WIND FRIGHTENS ME...

RELAX, HONEY, RELAX! NO USE GETTING THE JITTERS OVER NOTHING! HOW ABOUT A GAME OF CHESS?

HEE-HEE — THERE HE IS, MY BELOVED HUSBAND! WITH THAT OTHER WOMAN! HAH— HIS PROMISE DION'T MEAN MUCH! I HADN'T BEEN IN MY GRAVE SIX MONTHS BEFORE HE MARRIED AGAIN!

BUT NOW I'LL HAVE MY REVENGE! I STILL LOVE HIM AND I'M GOING TO HAVE HIM! AND I DON'T WANT HER AROUND! HEE-HEE— JUST WAIT UNTIL HE OPENS THE DOOR!

SO HARRY GREEN OPENS THE DOOR AND THERE SHE IS—HIS FIRST WIFE, WHO HE HAD BELIEVED TO BE SNUG IN HER GRAVE...

THE MAN FEELS A THRILL OF TERROR AS THE COLD, GRAVE-ROTTED LIPS PRESS AGAINST HIS OWN...

YAAAAAAAA— CATHY! B—BUT HOW— Y-YOU'RE DEAD!

HELLO, DARLING! YOU LOOK FRIGHTENED! BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE MY LOOKS, YOU KNOW! I'VE BEEN IN MY GRAVE A LONG TIME!

WHY, DARLING, WHAT'S THE MATTER? YOU'RE SHIVERING! I KNOW I MUST FEEL COLD, DEAR, BUT THAT CAN'T BE HELPED!

GAAA— Y-YOU'RE LIKE ICE!

OOOO— THIS IS HORRIBLE! IT C-CAN'T BE HAPPENING!

BUT IT IS HAPPENING! LATER THE CORPSE-WIFE JOINS THEM AT A NOT SO COZY LITTLE MEAL...

W-WE HAVE TO EAT! GO AHEAD, SUE! BUT Y-YOU, CATHY? I MEAN, YOU CAN'T...

NO, HARRY, DARLING! I DON'T HAVE TO EAT! BUT DON'T LET ME BOTHER YOU TWO — JUST GO AHEAD AND ENJOY YOUR DINNER! I'LL JUST SIT HERE AND WATCH YOU!

LATER, IN THE KITCHEN...

SHHH — DON'T LET HER HEAR US! I'VE GOT A PLAN — IF I CAN GET HER BACK TO THE GRAVEYARD SOME WAY...

BUT HOW? SHE'S POWERFUL, EVIL! A CORPSE FOR A YEAR AND STILL SHE CAN WALK AROUND!

NOW — NOW! IS THIS NICE? PLOTTING AGAINST ME ALREADY, WHEN I'VE JUST ARRIVED! ANYWAY, HARRY, THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO! NOTHING! I HAVE STRANGE POWERS NOW — AND I'LL DO JUST AS I PLEASE!

AND WHEN BEDTIME COMES...

PLEASE, CATHY! Y-YOU'RE NOT GOING TO SIT THERE ALL NIGHT, SURELY?

C-CAN'T YOU LEAVE US ALONE NOW? WE'RE IN YOUR POWER! WHAT CAN WE DO?

GO TO SLEEP! HAPPY DREAMS! I DON'T NEED SLEEP, OF COURSE, SO I'LL JUST SIT HERE AND KEEP WATCH! YOU WOULDN'T — (CHUCKLE) — WANT ANYTHING TO GET YOU?

BUT AS SOON AS THEY ARE ASLEEP...

NOW, YOU VIXEN! SUE! I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU! YOU'LL NEVER STEAL ANOTHER WOMAN'S HUSBAND — EVEN AFTER SHE'S DEAD! BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING TO DIE!

NOW! LIKE THIS! THIS PILLOW OVER YOUR NOSTRILS! YOU'LL SMOTHER, FIGHTING FOR AIR, FOR JUST ONE MORE BREATH OF SWEET, CLEAN AIR! SOON YOU'LL BE JUST LIKE ME! HEE-HEE-HEE...

EEEEEE-

HARRY GREEN, AWAKENED BY HIS WIFE'S DEATH SCREAM, SEES THE TERRIBLE SIGHT...

CATHY! GREAT HEAVENS! W-WHAT HAVE YOU DONE? SUE — SUE, MY DARLING!

HAH! YOUR DARLING? I WAS YOUR DARLING ONCE, REMEMBER? BUT LOOK AT HER NOW! DEAD! AS DEAD AS I AM!

HER HORRIBLE DEED OVER, THE GHOST OF CATHY DRIFTS OUT OF THE HOUSE LIKE EVIL MIST...

CATHY! COME BACK! YOU DID THIS — NOW YOU MUST HELP ME! THE POLICE — HOW CAN I EXPLAIN?

HEE—HEE! YOU CAN'T, HARRY, YOU CAN'T! ALL THAT IS PART OF MY PLAN!

NOTIFIED BY A SPECTRAL VOICE ON THE PHONE, PUZZLED POLICE VISIT THE COTTAGE AND FIND THE BODY OF SUE! HARRY GREEN IS ARRESTED FOR MURDER...

REAL NASTY CHARACTER, THIS GREEN! SHE NEVER HAD A CHANCE WITH THAT PILLOW ON HER FACE!

YES, IT'S OPEN AND SHUT, NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE DENIES IT! BUT WHAT I'D LIKE TO KNOW—WHO CALLED US AND GAVE US THE TIP?

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P.D

AND LATER AT HIS TRIAL...

YOUR STORY, HARRY GREEN, IS THE MOST FANTASTIC LIE EVER HEARD IN THIS COURT! YOU SAY A GHOST MURDERED YOUR WIFE! BUT THE JURY HAS FOUND YOU GUILTY AND THEREFORE I MUST SENTENCE YOU TO DIE...

NO! PLEASE, YOUR HONOR! I TOLD THE TRUTH! SO HELP ME I DID! CATHY KILLED SUE, NOT ME!

AND IN DUE TIME THE LAW TAKES ITS COURSE! A SCREAMING MAN, STILL PROTESTING HIS INNOCENCE, IS TAKEN TO HIS DEATH IN A GRIM LITTLE ROOM...

COME ON NOW, GREEN, NO USE FIGHTING!

BUT I TELL YOU I'M INNOCENT! INNOCENT! I DIDN'T KILL MY WIFE— I DIDN'T...

MAYBE! BUT THE LAW CAN'T RECOGNIZE GHOSTS! IF THERE EVER WAS A GHOST!

THE BODY OF HARRY GREEN IS LAID TO REST IN THE SAME GRAVEYARD WHERE CATHY AND SUE, HIS TWO WIVES, ARE BURIED! BUT HE DOES NOT REMAIN AT REST FOR LONG...

I CAN'T SLEEP! I MUST GO AND FIND THEM! THERE IS A STRANGE RESTLESSNESS IN ME! AND I HAVE THE POWER TO MOVE, TO WALK AGAIN!

SOMETHING IS CALLING ME BACK TO THE COTTAGE! I'LL GO THERE AT ONCE! AND, SOMEHOW, I THINK I KNOW WHAT I'M GOING TO FIND!

SO NOW THE CORPSE OF HARRY GREEN TAKES A WALK, FOLLOWING A WELL REMEMBERED PATH UNTIL...

YES—THEY'LL BE THERE! I FEEL IT IN MY—(CHUCKLE)—BONES! THEY'LL BE WAITING FOR ME IN THE COTTAGE!

YES, I WAS RIGHT! LIGHTS IN THE HOUSE, SMOKE COMING FROM THE CHIMNEY! ALL WARM AND COMFORTABLE, EVEN IF WE CORPSES DON'T NEED IT! HMMM—IT WOULD BE NICE TO FEEL WARM AGAIN!

HARRY GREEN ENTERS THE COTTAGE WHERE HE ONCE LIVED...

THE TABLE SET FOR THREE! HAH! THEY ARE EXPECTING ME, THEN! BUT WHERE ARE THEY? NOT A SIGN OF THEM ANYWHERE!

SUDDENLY, BEHIND HIM...

AH, THERE YOU ARE! HELLO, CATHY—AND SUE!

HELLO, DARLING! YOU WERE A LONG TIME GETTING HERE!

YES, WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR WEEKS, THINKING EVERY NIGHT THAT YOU WOULD COME!

BUT I'M HERE NOW, SUE! AND WE'LL NEVER PART AGAIN! NEVER!

I'M GLAD TO HEAR YOU SAY THAT, DARLING!

AND A KISS FOR ME, TOO, SWEETHEART? A KISS FOR CATHY! I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THIS, YOU KNOW!

YES! BUT NO HARD FEELINGS, CATHY! WE'RE ALL GOING TO BE FRIENDS FROM NOW ON! AFTER ALL, WHAT IS THERE TO QUARREL ABOUT?

YOU'RE RIGHT! WE'VE ALL GOT SOMETHING IN COMMON NOW!

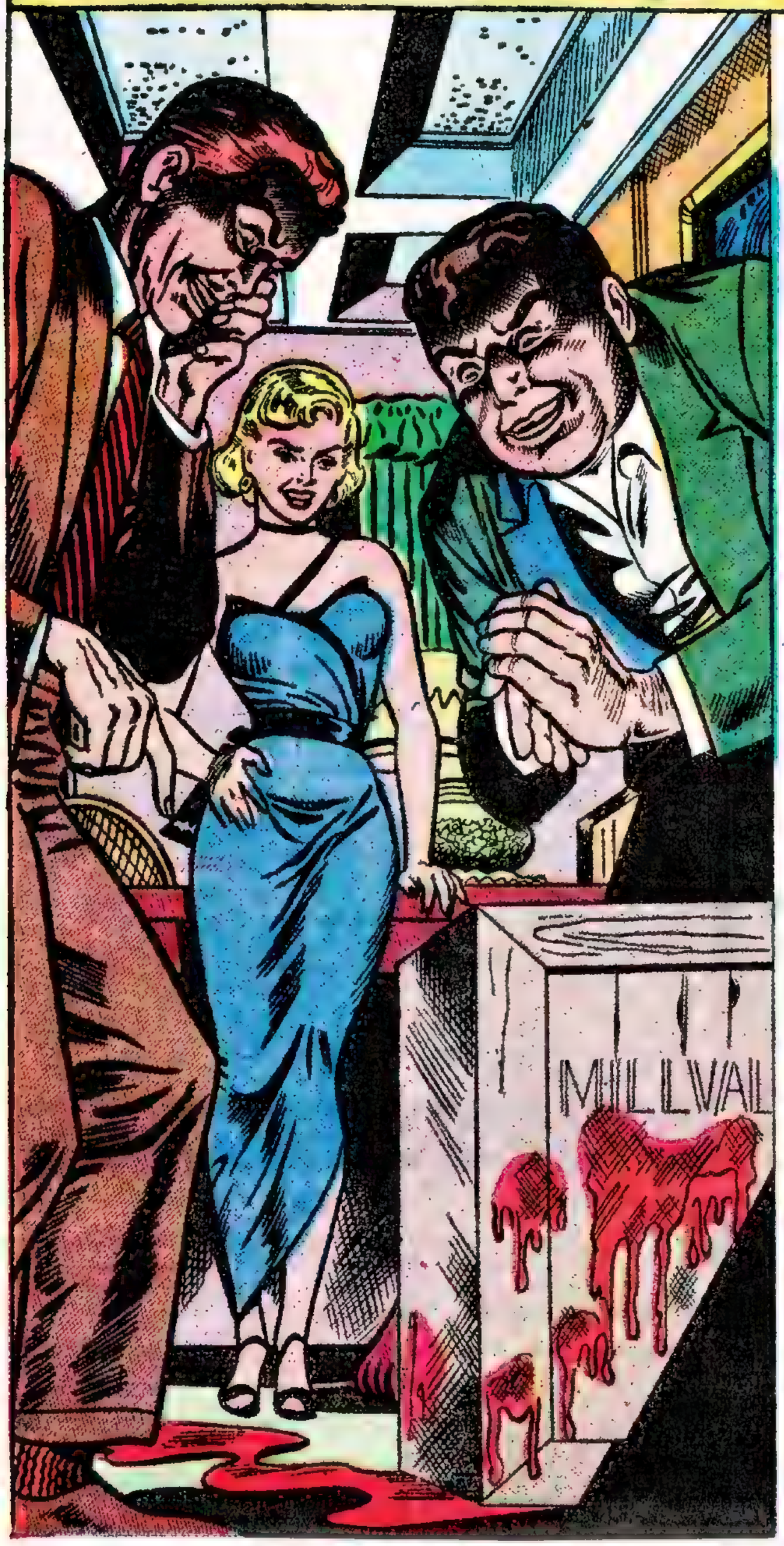
YES—WE ARE ALL *DEAD!*

SO HERE'S TO US AND TO THE FUTURE! AND WE NEED NEVER WORRY—ABOUT—DYING!

THE END

ALL THOSE WITH *STRONG* STOMACHS ARE INVITED TO ATTEND A *PARTY* GIVEN BY THIS TERRIFYING *THREESOME* OF *THIEVES*. THEY HAVE *PLENTY* OF REASON TO CELEBRATE . . . AFTER ALL, THEY JUST HIT THE *JACKPOT* AT.

BANK night



AT THE END OF THE DIMLY-LIT CORRIDOR SAT A LONE FIGURE, BUSY AND UNAWARE OF THE TWO SHADOWS WHICH DETACHED THEMSELVES FROM THE OTHERS AND MOVED STEALTHILY TOWARD ONE OF THE CLOSED DOORS.

NOISELESSLY THE PROWLERS SLID INTO THE SMALL ROOM. IN THE DARK THEY GROPED TOWARD THEIR OBJECTIVE, WHICH LOOMED LARGE IN THE SPARSELY FURNISHED AREA. ONE OF THE MEN BENT OVER . . . THEN SWUNG OPEN THE HEAVY METAL DOOR. THERE WAS A TINY CLICK, AS THE LIGHT REVEALED THE PRECIOUS CONTENTS OF THE CABINET.

Mysterious Adventures #19, April 1954. Art: Dick Beck. Story Comics.

STILL UNOBSERVED, THE TWO MEN SLIPPED FROM THE ROOM AND DOWN THE HALL... BUT NOW EACH CARRIED A HEAVY BOX.

OUTSIDE THE BUILDING A CAR WAITED...

YOU GOT IT, DARLING!

YES, BUT WE'RE GOING BACK FOR MORE. BE READY TO GO, MAGDA.

TWICE THE SINISTER PAIR RETURNED TO THE LITTLE ROOM FOR ANOTHER LOAD, BUT AS THEY CREPT FROM THE BUILDING THE LAST TIME.

WAIT! STOP, THEIVES!

THE *WATCHMAN!* HURRY, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!

THE THIEVES AND THEIR BEAUTIFUL CONFEDERATE GLOATED OVER THEIR LOOT AS THEY SPED AWAY.

THAT DODDERING OLD IDIOT DIDN'T GET A GOOD LOOK AT US. WE'RE SAFE...AND *RICH!*

THIS HAUL CALLS FOR A CELEBRATION. WE'LL BREAK A *BOTTLE* TONIGHT, EH, JOE? *HA! HA!*

BUT OLD MATT *HAD* GOTTEN A LOOK AT THE TRIO AND WITHIN MINUTES HE WAS TELLING HIS STORY...

ONE WAS TALL AND THIN... ONE SHORT AND FAT... BIG, BLACK SEDAN. AND THE BLONDE WAS A REAL BEAUTY. BUT WHAT I CAN'T FIGGER...

OK, THANKS, MATT. WITH THAT DESCRIPTION WE SHOULD GET 'EM.

LIGHTS BURNED LATE IN MILLVALE THAT NIGHT, AS THE CITY OFFICIALS GOT WORD OF THE CRIME.

MEN, THIS IS A TERRIBLE THING. BUT CHIEF RAEFORD HAS THE WHOLE FORCE ON THE CASE. WE'LL HAVE THESE CROOKS BY DAYLIGHT.

WE'D BETTER, MAYOR! THAT STUFF CAN BE *DANGEROUS* IN THE WRONG HANDS.

POLICE HEADQUARTERS WAS A HIVE OF ACTIVITY AS REPORTERS QUESTIONED THE BUSY CHIEF RAEFORD...

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY THE HAUL WAS WORTH, CHIEF?

IT'S *PRICELESS*, BOYS. THE COUNTY PATROL'S PUTTIN' UP A ROADBLOCK. WE INTEND TO RECOVER THE GOODS AND THOSE RATS IN TIME FOR YOUR MORNING EDITION.

BUT THE "RATS" SEEMED FAR FROM TRAPPED AS THEIR POWERFUL CAR PURRED DOWN THE HIGH-WAY

TAKE CARE OF OUR CARGO, VLADO. IT'S GOING TO PROVIDE US WITH EASY LIVING FOR A LONG TIME.

JOE, DARLING, THIS PLAN WAS SHEER GENIUS! I'VE NEVER BEEN SO HAPPY!

LET'S STOP A MINUTE. I JUST WANT TO LOOK AT IT.

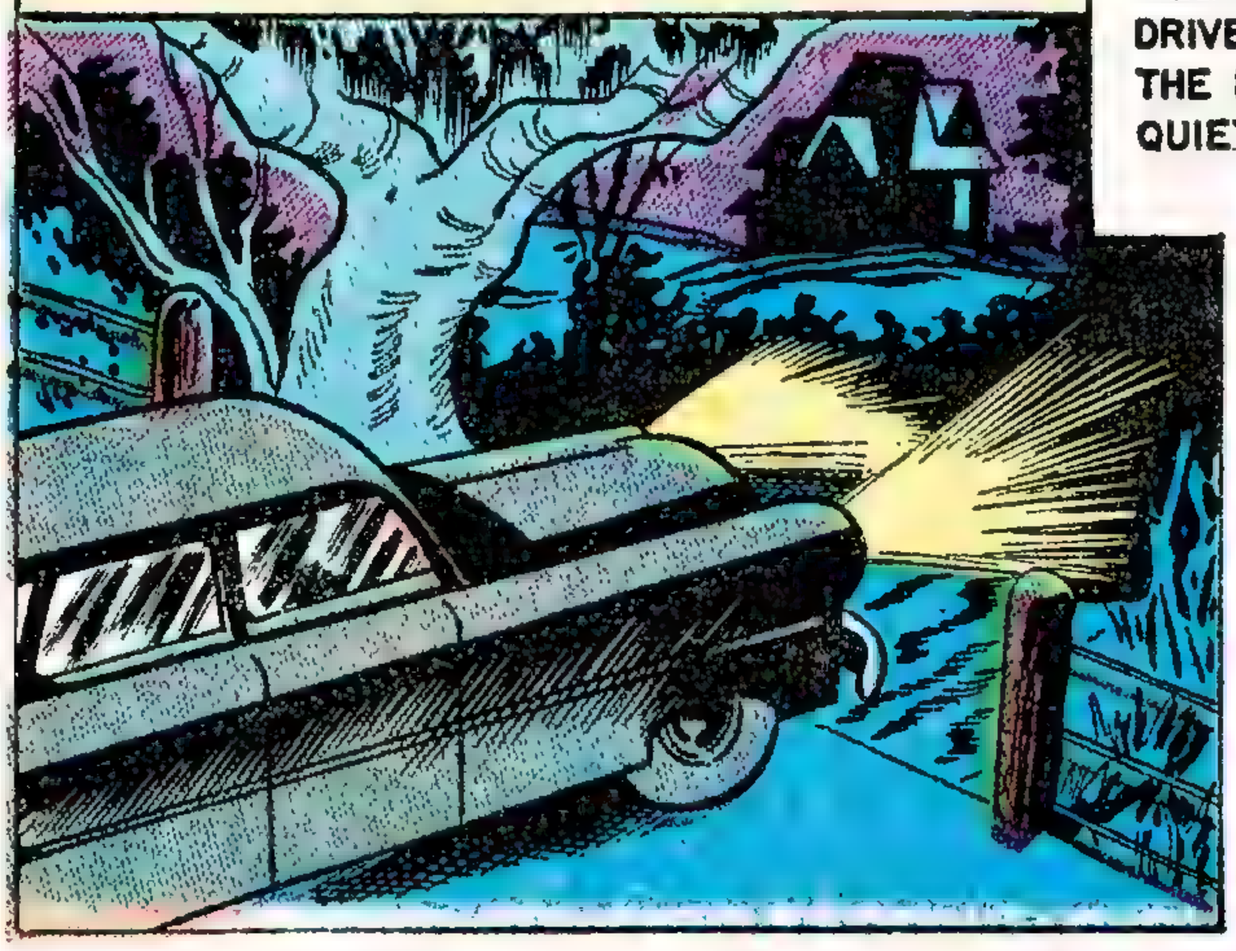
PATIENCE, BELOVED! YOU CAN FEAST YOUR EYES WHEN WE GET TO OUR LITTLE HIDEAWAY. WATCH FOR THE SIDE ROAD, VLADO.

ON THE STEPS OF THE "OWL-NITE DINER" A TRUCK DRIVER LIT A CIGARETTE AND IDLY NOTED A BIG BLACK SEDAN WHICH HAD SLOWED TO LET A TRAILER-TRUCK PULL OUT IN FRONT OF IT.

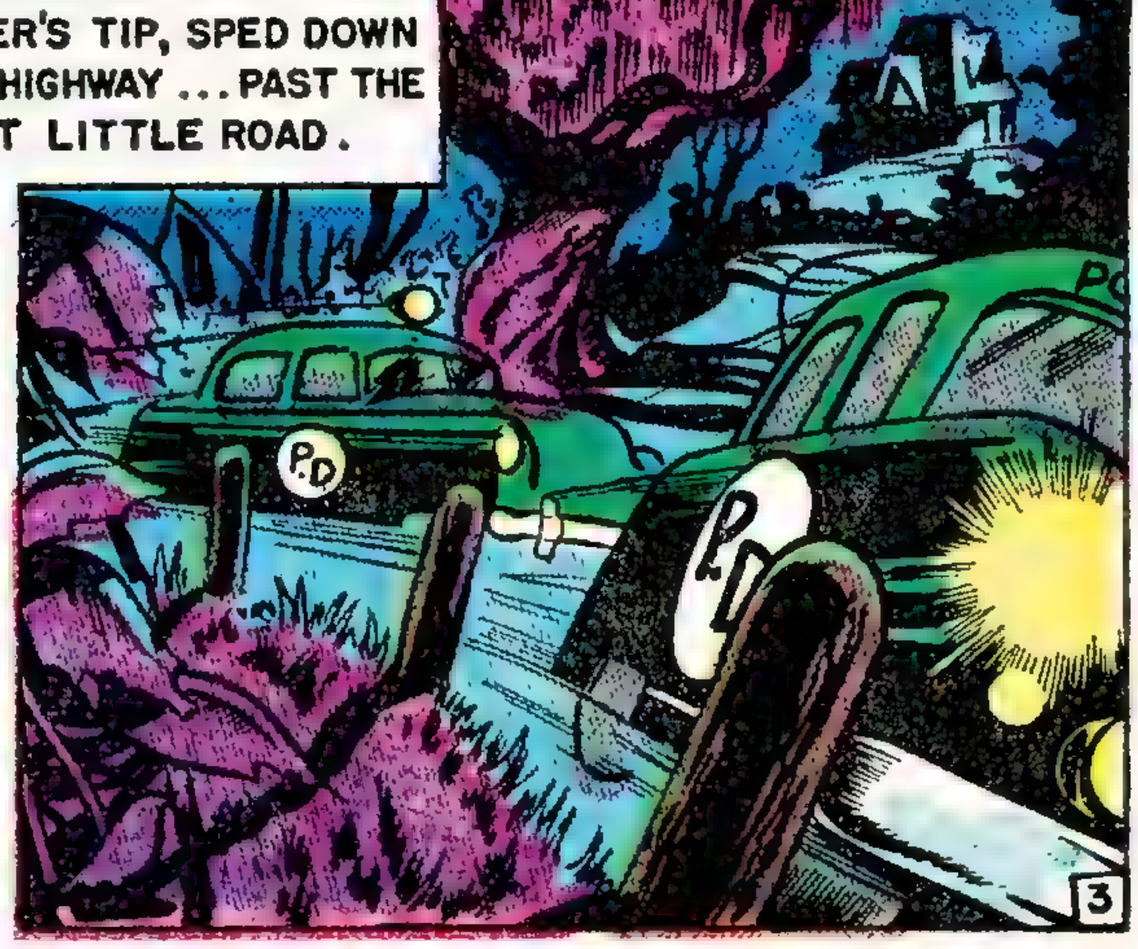
THEN, AS THE CAR PULLED AROUND THE TRUCK AND HISSED AWAY, HIS JAW DROPPED. . .

THE *THIEVES*... THAT RADIO ALARM.... THEY JUST PASSED... PHONE, WHERE'S THE PHONE?

A FEW MILES BEYOND THE DINER THE CAR SLOWED AGAIN--THIS TIME TO TURN DOWN A NARROW, TREE-LINED SIDE ROAD . . .



...AND MINUTES LATER, CHIEF RAEFORD'S MEN, ALERTED BY THE TRUCK DRIVER'S TIP, SPED DOWN THE HIGHWAY ... PAST THE QUIET LITTLE ROAD.



MEANWHILE, IN MILLVALE, THE OFFICIALS GREW MORE AND MORE CONCERNED.

ARE YOU *SURE* OF THOSE DESCRIPTIONS, MATT?

I DON'T CARE *HOW* TIRED YOU ARE! STAY AT THE STATION TILL SOMETHING BREAKS!

LAB REPORTS NO FINGERPRINTS, CHIEF.

EDITOR

WEARILY, THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT, THE MAYOR ISSUED STATEMENTS.

THIS CRIME *MUST* NOT GO UNSOLVED! THE CRIMINALS AND THEIR LOOT *MUST* BE FOUND! WE HAVE NOW ALERTED THE ENTIRE STATE.

GEASELESSLY, THE POLICE CARS COMBED EVERY ROAD...AND THEN BEGAN ALL OVER...

THEY *MUST* BE HOLED UP *SOMEWHERE* BY NOW, ED.

YEAH. WE'LL HAVE TO START BEATIN' THE BUSHES. THESE ROADS ARE BLOCKED SO TIGHT YOU COULDN'T GET A *BICYCLE* THROUGH, MUCH LESS THAT BIG, BLACK JOB.

OK, I'LL SEARCH THE OLD ARDMORE PLACE IF YOU'LL TAKE THE NEXT FARMHOUSE.

ALWAYS *GOLD-BRICKING!* YOU KNOW THAT DUMP'S BEEN *VACANT* FOR 20 YEARS. *NO, SIR!* WE'LL GO WAKE UP THE FARMERS AND GET YELLED AT TOGETHER.

PD

AS EACH LEAD CAME IN, CHIEF RAEFORD'S HOPES ROSE...ONLY TO BE DASHED EACH TIME.

THE SEDAN THE OLD LADY IN GAYNOR COUNTY SPOTTED TURNED OUT TO BE A BLUE CONVERTIBLE...AND THE BOX THE MAN ON POTTS ROAD WAS CARRYING INTO HIS HOUSE WAS A CASE OF BEER...AND THE...

ALL RIGHT! *ALL RIGHT!*

FOR THE FIRST TIME IN HIS LIFE, THE EDITOR OF THE MILLVALE *TIMES* SEEMED RELUCTANT TO PRINT A SENSATIONAL STORY...

THIS CRIME AFFECTS *EVERY-ONE* IN MILLVALE! WE'LL HOLD UP THE STORY TILL THE LAST MINUTE.

EDITO

IF THE CHIEF CAN SMOKE OUT THOSE LOUSES BEFORE MORNING, MAYBE WE CAN *KILL* THE WHOLE STORY, BOSS.

SPEAKING OF *KILLING*, I'D LIKE TO GET MY HANDS ON THOSE...THOSE...

THE HOURS OF THE NIGHT CRAWLED BY IN THE WEARY, ANXIOUS, WAITING LITTLE TOWN . . .

AROUND IT, THE COUNTRYSIDE SLEPT IN DARKNESS BROKEN FITFULLY BY THE STABBING LIGHTS OF POLICE CARS PROBING, PROWLING . . .

...PASSING FOR PERHAPS THE HUNDREDTH TIME THE ROAD BY THE OLD ARDMORE MANSION WHICH, EARLIER THIS NIGHT, FOUND ITS EMPTINESS VIOLATED.

A MATCH SPUTTERED AS MAGDA LIT THE LAMP, HER FINGERS SHAKING WITH EAGERNESS . . .

SMARTEST THING I EVER DID, PICKING THIS PLACE FOR OUR HIDEOUT. THEY'LL *NEVER* SEARCH FOR US IN THIS OLD *TOMB*. HA! HA!

QUICKLY, BRING IN THE REST, JOE DARLING!

NOW, AT LAST, THEY STOOD OVER THEIR NIGHT'S GAIN--DEVOURING IT WITH THEIR EYES.

I WISH I'D SEEN THEIR FACES (HEH, HEH)...WHAT DO YOU SUPPOSE THEY SAID?

"WHO COULD DO SUCH A THING? *HA, HA!*... "WHY WOULD THEY STEAL..." (GASP) OH, MY SIDES ACHE!

AND THE HEADLINES... "RUTHLESS THIEVES," "NEW STYLE IN BANK ROBBERIES"...

AND IN MILLVALE, AT THAT MOMENT, THEY *HAD* SAID . . .

OH, IT'S SO SENSELESS! WHAT COULD THEY *WANT* IT FOR?

I DON'T KNOW..., I DON'T KNOW... PERHAPS TO SELL. REMEMBER IT'S *VERY* VALUABLE.

WE'RE RUNNING THE STORY, MR. MAYOR. THE WHOLE TOWN'S BOUND TO FIND OUT, AND MAYBE IF WE EXPLAIN...

HOW *CAN* WE EXPLAIN, JESS EVERYBODY IN TOWN WENT TO THAT BANK. THEY'VE *ALL* GOT A STAKE IN THIS ROBBERY.

BUT MILLVALE'S LOSS WAS CLEAR PROFIT FOR THE CHILLING COMBO AT ARDMORE HOUSE, AND THEY PLANNED TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT.

LET'S HAVE A *REAL* CELEBRATION!

OH, YES! WE'LL EVEN GET DRESSED UP!

HERE'S A TABLE-CLOTH...CANDLES... WINE GLASSES... THE WORKS!

WHILE JOE AND MAGDA DRESSED, VLADO FIXED THE REFRESHMENTS. AS HE HEARD THEIR STEPS ON THE STAIRS, HE LIT THE CANDLES AND SET THE DECANTER NEXT TO THE WINE GLASSES. PERFECT! PLEASED WITH HIS HANDIWORK, HE STOOD BACK WAITING FOR THEIR ENTRANCE.

(HUMS) "I'VE GOT YOU UNDER... MMMM."

AND HIS EFFORT WAS DULY NOTED BY THE COUPLE WHO SWEPT IN, ARM IN ARM...

I PROPOSE THE FIRST TOAST TO JOE, WHOSE PLAN...

NO, NO, VLADO! THE FIRST TOAST SHOULD BE TO OUR *BROTHERS* IN MILLVALE.

YES, MY DEAR. OUR *BLOOD* BROTHERS! HA! HA! OPEN ANOTHER BOTTLE OF RARE OLD MILLVALE '53, VLADO (SMACK). I'M REALLY *BLOODTHIRSTY* TONIGHT!

TOO BAD IT'S STILL COOL FROM BEING IN THAT HOSPITAL REFRIGERATOR. IT HAS MUCH MORE FLAVOR AT *BODY TEMPERATURE!*

HEH, HEH, IF THE COPS CAME IN THEY'D CATCH US *RED-HANDED!*

WHOLE BLOOD

WHOLE BLOOD

MILLVALE CITY HOSPITAL

WHOLE BLOOD

MILLVALE CITY

BUT THE POLICE WERE DESTINED NEVER TO SOLVE THE BLOOD-BANK ROBBERY, AND THE GOOD CITIZENS OF MILLVALE NEVER KNEW THAT THE BLOOD THEY HAD DONATED FOR THEIR LOVED ONES FURNISHED A *FEAST* FOR *VAMPIRES!*

THE END

The DAY THE WORLD DIED

I CERTAINLY APPRECIATE YOUR WORKING OVERTIME, NED -- AND YOU TOO, JEAN! SOMEHOW -- I'VE HAD AN OVERPOWERING URGE TO GET THINGS *DONE* THESE PAST FEW WEEKS!

WE'RE GLAD TO HELP, DR. WILLARD -- BUT THIS PACE CAN BE *DANGEROUS* AT YOUR AGE! WE'LL STAY AN HOUR LONGER -- AND *THEN* WE'RE SEEING YOU HOME!

RADIOACTIVE VAULT — KEEP OUT

*IMAGINE A SILENCE, AS IF THE EARTH HAD SUDDENLY BECOME A MUTED TOMB -- IMAGINE A VOID IN WHICH NOTHING MOVES -- NOTHING EXCEPT **YOU** AND A SINGLE COMPANION! **THEN** TRY TO PICTURE THE HIDEOUS CREATURES WHO SWARMED TO CLAIM OUR STRICKEN PLANET -- AND YOU'LL GET SOME IDEA OF HOW TERROR STALKED THE STREETS -- **THE DAY THE WORLD DIED!***

NED -- WE'VE BOTH KNOWN FOR SOME TIME THAT DR. WILLARD'S HEART IS FAILING -- THAT HE HASN'T MUCH LONGER TO LIVE! DON'T YOU THINK WE SHOULD MAKE HIM STOP?

NO SENSE DOING *THAT*, HONEY! WHY SHOULDN'T HE BE *HERE* WHEN THE END COMES, WORKING ON ATOMIC EXPERIMENTS TO WHICH HE'S DEVOTED HIS LIFETIME?

LET'S LOCK OURSELVES IN THE VAULT AND HAVE A CHECK WITH THAT GEIGER COUNTER, JEAN! DON'T WORRY ABOUT DR. WILLARD -- I'LL SEE TO IT THAT HE QUITS AS SOON AS HE'S WORKED OUT THAT MESON-SPLITTING PROBLEM!

NED! MAYBE BEING ISOLATED IN THIS VAULT IS GIVING ME DELUSIONS -- BUT I ALMOST THOUGHT I *SAW* SOMETHING LURKING AT THE OTHER END OF THE LAB!

WONDER WHAT'S WRONG WITH THOSE MICE? THE AIR IN THE LABORATORY'S HEAVILY CHARGED WITH ELECTRONS -- BUT *THAT* WOULDN'T ALARM THEM -- *AS IF THEY DETECTED A STRANGER!*

Forbidden Worlds #5, March – April 1952. Art: George Wilhelms. ACG.

THEN IT COMES -- THE THING THAT WILL CHANGE THE MEANING OF EVIL AND TERROR FOREVER!

GOOD LORD -- WHAT IS IT?

OVERWHELMED BY SHOCK, THE GASPING WORDS AND FALTERING HEART FADE OUT TOGETHER -- AND AS DR. WILLARD SLUMPS AT THE CONTROL PANEL --

AAAGH!

CLICK!

ON

CRRAK!

NED -- IT'S HIDEOUS! THE VERY **SIGHT** OF IT KILLED DR. WILLARD!

YE GODS -- THE **CYCLOTRON!** THE SWITCH HE ACCIDENTALLY THREW SENT A SURGE OF POWER THOUGH IT -- STRONG ENOUGH TO START **A MESON CHAIN REACTION!**

RUSHING FROM THE PROTECTIVE VAULT --

WHERE'S DR. WILLARD'S BODY? AND THOSE CAGED MICE, NED -- THERE'S NO SIGN OF **THEM!**

SOMETHING'S HAPPENED! MESONS ARE THE THINGS THAT **UNITE ATOMS!** THEY'RE THE BASIC FACTOR OF **EXISTENCE** -- **I'VE GOT TO SWITCH OFF THE CYCLOTRON!**

BUT AS NED RUSHES TOWARD THE CONTROL PANEL --

ME -- BEYONDER! BEYONDER -- KILL -- YOU!

WAM!

DON'T WAIT, JEAN! IT'S COMING CLOSER -- **GET OUT WHILE YOU CAN!**

NO, NED -- FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE DON'T TRY TO COPE WITH THAT THING **YOURSELF!** ANOTHER FEW MINUTES WON'T MATTER -- **LET'S GET THE POLICE!**

EXPERIMENT ROBOT — *HANDS OFF!*

YOU -- NOT ESCAPE! BEYONDERS COME -- MANY -- MANY!

NED -- HURRY!

I'LL TRY TO KEEP MY NERVES UNDER CONTROL WHILE YOU CALL THE POLICE! NO USE MAKING PEOPLE PANICKY BY REVEALING WHAT'S INSIDE!

BABY-- WHAT PEOPLE? WHERE ARE THEY?

WILLARD ATOMIC LABORATORY

IN AN UNCANNY VACUUM-- WITHOUT SOUND OR MOVEMENT--

LOOK! SHOPS-- CARS-- THEY'RE ALL EMPTY, JEAN! THERE ISN'T A SOUL AROUND!

WE'VE GOT TO FIND SOMEONE, HONEY! THIS COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED-- NOT TO A CITY OF EIGHT MILLION!

IT DIDN'T, NED-- IT DIDN'T! I HEAR VOICES-- FOOTSTEPS-- THERE ARE PEOPLE!

THANK HEAVEN FOR THAT! THE LEAD-LINED VAULT PROTECTED US FROM THE MESON CHAIN REACTION-- BUT IT'S REMOVED ALL SIGNS OF LIFE FROM THE ENTIRE NEIGHBOR-HOOD!

YES-- AND IT MADE ME FEEL HORRIBLY ALONE FOR A FEW SECONDS! NOW AT LEAST THERE WILL BE A CHANCE TO GET SOME HELP-- AND THE MORAL SUPPORT OF JUST SEEING SOMEONE!

NOW PLAYING

THEN--

OHH!

BEYONDERS HAVE COME! BEYONDERS HAVE COME!

LIKE A RISING TIDE-- LIKE THE NEARING BEAT OF DOOM--

THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THEM, NED-- COMING FROM ALL DIRECTIONS!

NOW I KNOW CATASTROPHE'S HIT THE CITY! COME ON-- OUR ONLY HOPE NOW IS TO REACH THE ATOMIC ENERGY COMMISSION IN WASHINGTON BY PHONE!

NOW PLAYING

CLUMP! CLUMP! CLUMP!

MINUTES LATER-- IN A NEARBY SUBWAY STATION--

HELLO! HELLO!-- JEAN, THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD-- I CAN'T GET THROUGH TO WASHINGTON!

NO ANSWER AT ALL? THEN IT ISN'T JUST THE CITY THAT'S BEEN AFFECTED-- THE MESON CHAIN REACTION HAS HIT THE WHOLE EASTERN SEABOARD!

SUDDENLY--

BEYONDERS KILL! BEYONDERS KILL!

YE GODS-- THEY'RE BLOCKING THE WAY OUT! QUICK-- JUMP DOWN TO THE TRACKS!

WITH THE GUTTURAL CHANT BOOMING THROUGH THE TUNNEL--

NED-- THEY'VE SPOTTED US! HOW CAN WE GET AWAY-- WHERE'LL WE GO?

THERE'S A STALLED TRAIN-- JUST SHORT OF THE STATION! HURRY, JEAN-- MAYBE WE CAN MAKE IT!

JEAN-- SWING THE THROTTLE OPEN!

NOTHING STOP BEYONDERS!

NOTHING STOP BEYONDERS!

POW!

A GRINDING LURCH-- AND THE TRAIN PICKS UP SPEED--

CRASH!

TWO HUMANS CAREENING THROUGH THE LONELY TUNNELS-- GRAPPLING WITH A TERRIBLE DECISION--

I'M CERTAIN A GOOD PART OF THE COUNTRY HAS BEEN WIPED OUT, NED-- BUT IF WE WAIT LONG ENOUGH-- HELP'S BOUND TO COME FROM *SOMEWHERE!*

WE CAN'T GAMBLE ON *THAT!* THE BEYONDERS ARE PROBABLY SWARMING THROUGH THE STREETS, BUT IT'S NEARLY MIDNIGHT-- WITH LUCK, WE CAN REACH THE *UNIVERSAL BROADCASTING COMPANY* WITHOUT BEING NOTICED!

MINUTES LATER--

UNIVERSAL B

SUBWAY

45

IT'S USELESS, NED-- YOU CAN'T MANIPULATE THE COMPLICATED BROADCASTING APPARATUS ***ALONE!***

MAYBE NOT-- BUT AT THE STROKE OF TWELVE, ALL THE MAIN STATIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD EXCHANGE CALLS! THEY'RE ***SURE*** TO SUSPECT SOMETHING WRONG WHEN THEY FIND ***THIS*** STATION'S OFF THE AIR!

UNIVERSAL BROADCASTING COMPANY • SHORT WAVE STUDIO •

SLOWLY, FATEFULLY, THE SWEEP HAND CIRCLES THE STUDIO CLOCK... 12.01 ...

12:02-- NED--YOU'RE SURE--***NOTHING FROM LONDON?***

POSITIVE! NOT A PEEP FROM ***PARIS,*** EITHER!

MAYBE SOMETHING ***ELSE*** RELEASED THE BEYONDERS, NED! IF AN ENEMY NATION FOUND A WAY TO USE ***SUPERNATURAL*** FORCES---

NOPE--MOSCOW AND PEIPING ARE SILENT, TOO! IT'S NOT A SECRET WEAPON, JEAN-- ***IT'S DOOM--DOOM FOR THE ENTIRE WORLD!***

THEN--BREAKING THE SILENCE LIKE A LIGHTNING BOLT--

ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

WE ***AREN'T*** ALONE, NED-- WE ***CAN'T*** BE-- ***WHEN SOMEONE ELSE IS*** BROADCASTING!

IT'S COMING FROM THAT TV SET-- I'LL SWITCH ON THE SCREEN!

AS THE BLURRED IMAGE COMES HORRIBLY INTO FOCUS--

GOOD HEAVENS!

I AM THE LEADER OF THE BEYONDERS! I HAVE A MESSAGE-- A MESSAGE FOR THE ***ONLY TWO HUMANS IN THE WORLD*** WHO HAVE NOT VANISHED INTO THE REALM OF THE UNSEEN!

WE BEYONDERS ARE SO EVIL THAT OUR SOULS NEVER KNEW LIFE! BUT WE CAN SENSE WHEN A HUMAN IS ABOUT TO DIE--WE SEND A BEYONDER TO SEE IF WE CAN CLAIM THE SPIRIT-- BECAUSE ***THAT*** WILL ADMIT US TO THE WORLD OF THE LIVING! WE HAVE TRIED ***BILLIONS*** OF TIMES-- WE HAVE WATCHED THE DEATH THROES OF THE WORST MURDERERS AND TYRANTS IN HISTORY-- BUT ***NONE*** HAVE BEEN FIENDISH ENOUGH TO YIELD A SPIRIT TO ***US!***

BUT THE BEYONDER WHO WAS SENT TO WATCH THE DEATH OF DR. WILLARD-- AND WAS MADE VISIBLE FOR THE FIRST TIME BY THE ELECTRON-CHARGED ATMOSPHERE-- ***THAT*** BEYONDER DISCOVERED THE WORLD IS ***OURS!*** EVERY LIVING ORGANISM HAS BEEN FATED FOR SOMETHING ***WORSE*** THAN DEATH-- THEY'VE BEEN SWEPT INTO THE INVISIBLE WORLD OF NOTHINGNESS-- ***FOREVER!***

As NED SWITCHES OFF THE CHILLING FEATURES--

TO THINK IT COULD HAVE HAPPENED IN A SPLIT SECOND FLASH, NED! MILLIONS OF PEOPLE, MYRIADS OF ANIMALS HAVE VANISHED-- BUT IT'S LIKE AN UNENDING TRANCE-- THEY'RE NOT EVEN AWARE IT HAS HAPPENED!

WAIT--THE MESON CHAIN REACTION DID SPREAD ACROSS THE EARTH IN A SINGLE INSTANT-- BUT THE FISSION IS STILL UNDER CONTROL IN ONE PLACE-- THE CYCLO-TRON!

IT'S EASY TO FIGURE ROUGHLY HOW LONG THE MESONS IN THE CYCLOTRON WILL LAST! ACCORDING TO THAT-- EVERY LIVING BEING IS GOING THROUGH ITS LAST HOUR OF INVISIBLE EXISTENCE! ONCE THE CHAIN REACTION IN THE CYCLOTRON IS COMPLETE, THAT WILL BE THE END-- THE DAY THE WORLD DIED!

BABY-- IT'S NOT TOO LATE YET! THE FISSION PROCESS CAN BE REVERSED-- IF WE REACH THE LABORATORY SOON ENOUGH!

NED-- FOR MY SAKE-- DON'T TRY! YOU'RE BOUND TO BE CAUGHT BY ONE OF THE BE-YONDERS -- AND THEN WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ME--THE ONLY LIVING CREATURE IN A WORLD OF HORROR?

BUT IF WE CAN END THE HORROR, JEAN-- IF WE CAN RESTORE THE WORLD AND SEND THOSE CREEPS BACK TO THEIR UNSEEN EXILE-- ISN'T IT WORTH A TRY? WHAT WILL LIFE MEAN ANYWAY-- IF WE DON'T TRY?

BEYONDERS OWN THE EARTH!

BEYONDERS OWN THE EARTH!

SOON AFTERWARD--

IT'S HOPELESS, NED-- THEY'LL KNOW IT'S YOU THE SECOND THEY DETECT SOMEONE IN THE LABORATORY-- IT CAN'T BE ANYONE ELSE!

YOU'RE WRONG, BABY--IT COULD BE THE ELECTRONIC ROBOT DR. WILLARD INVENTED FOR EXPERIMENTAL PURPOSES! IT CAN'T THINK-- IT CAN'T ACTUALLY DO ANYTHING TO HELP US-- EXCEPT TRICK THE BEYONDERS INTO THINKING IT'S ME!

THEN-- WITH THE HOARSE BREATHING OF THE BEYONDERS RASPING FROM THE SHADOWS--

THEY HAVEN'T SPOTTED ME YET! GOOD THING IT'S NEARLY DARK OVER AT THE RADIOACTIVE VAULT-- BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE I'M TAKING THIS ELECTRONIC ROBOT CONTROL!

SO FAR-- SO GOOD! NOW WE'LL SEE HOW THOSE CREEPS REACT-- WHEN THE ROBOT PLODS PAST THEM IN SEMI-DARKNESS!

A MOMENT LATER --

THE HUMAN! THE HUMAN!

BEYONDERS KILL! BEYONDERS KILL!

THEN--

THE DARKNESS HAS FOOLED 'EM INTO THINKING I'VE WALKED INTO THE VAULT! NOW--

IN THERE! AFTER HIM!

THIS OUGHT TO HOLD 'EM AT LEAST UNTIL I GET TO THE CONTROL PANEL-- AND THEN THEY'LL BE DOOMED BY THE FLASH THAT RESTORES THE WORLD!

SLAM!

UNEXPECTEDLY--

ONE BEYONDER-- NOT INSIDE!

HOLY SMOKE--THERE GOES THE ROBOT CONTROL!

WAM!

AS NED MAKES A DESPERATE RUSH--

HUMAN NOT--DO ANYTHING! -- HUMAN-- DIE!

CRASH!

THAT HIDEOUS CREATURE KNOWS WHAT NED'S TRYING TO DO! IT'S READY TO SMASH THE CONTROL PANEL-- THE LAST HOPE OF THE WORLD!

SUDDENLY--A WEIRD METALLIC GROWL SOUNDS FROM THE SHADOWS!

AANGH... AANGH!

GOOD LORD--THE ROBOT'S MOVING-- MOVING BY ITSELF! AND THAT GESTURE-- RUBBING THE SIDE OF ITS FACE-- IT'S JUST WHAT DR. WILLARD USED TO DO WHEN HE WAS ANGRY!

WITH THE UNSWERVING PURPOSE OF A MACHINE -- A MACHINE MOTIVATED BY THE SPIRIT OF THE MAN WHO INVENTED IT --

ANNGH!

CRASH!

THE OTHERS ARE SLAMMING AGAINST THE VAULT DOOR -- THIS'LL HAVE TO BE FAST!

IN THE NEXT INSTANT -- ECHOING THROUGH THE LABORATORY AND THROUGH THE CITY -- WHEREVER THE STALKING BEYONDERS REEL INTO THE AGONY OF OBLIVION --

YAAGH!

A MOMENT LATER --

THOSE TERRIBLE CREATURES ARE GONE, NED -- THE CYCLOTRON HAS STARTED A REVERSE FISSION PROCESS THAT WILL AFFECT MESONS *EVERYWHERE* -- BUT DID IT HAPPEN SOON ENOUGH?

LISTEN! I CAN'T TRUST MY EARS AT THIS STAGE -- I WANT TO BE SURE I'M REALLY HEARING THINGS!

NED -- IT'S A BIRD -- *SINGING RIGHT OUTSIDE THE WINDOW!*

AND AUTO HORNS!

I HAD A QUEER FEELING A WHILE BACK, CASSIDY -- JUST A KIND OF FLASH IN FRONT OF MY EYES!

YEAH -- SO DID I! PROBABLY THE WEATHER -- BUT WHY COMPLAIN -- WE'RE *ALIVE*, AREN'T WE?

ALIVE! NED -- WE'LL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO EXPLAIN WHAT A CLOSE CALL IT WAS!

NOPE -- *WE'RE* THE ONLY ONES WHO KNOW HOW CLOSELY LIFE HUNG IN THE BALANCE, HONEY -- WHEN THE BEYONDERS TOOK OVER FOR A RULE OF HORROR -- *THE DAY THE WORLD DIED!*

THE END

LAND OF THE LIVING DEAD

ANCIENT LEGENDS TELL US THAT THE BOUNDARY LINE BETWEEN OUR WORLD AND THE REALM OF THE SPIRITS IS A SLIGHT ONE, AND EASILY CROSSED! HERE'S AN ASTOUNDING TALE THAT SHOWS HOW ONE MAN TRAVELED FROM ONE WORLD TO THE OTHER, NOT ONCE BUT **TWICE!** WE CAN'T GUARANTEE THE ACCURACY OF THE ACCOUNT.... BUT WE **CAN** GUARANTEE THAT IT'S AN OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD STORY THAT WILL SET YOU TO WONDERING UNTIL THE END OF YOUR DAYS!

To The Editor of "Forbidden Worlds"....

This is one letter that's really out of this world— because it's being written by a ghost! I'm sure you're familiar with the name of Philip Wentworth, since it was splashed all over the front pages at the time of the famous Wentworth murder case in Miami... and I'm writing you because yours is the only publication that would dare to print my incredible story— and clear my name!—

IT ALL STARTED THAT DAY I HAD TO INTERRUPT MY SOLITARY FISHING VACATION ON A REMOTE ISLET IN THE FLORIDA KEYS.... BECAUSE I HAD RUN OUT OF THE CHLOROQUIN TABLETS WHICH CONTROLLED THE RECURRENT FEVER I'D CONTRACTED IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC....."

I CAN FEEL THE FEVER SETTING IN! HOPE I CAN GET TO A DRUGSTORE ON THE MAINLAND BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE!

"AFTER TYING UP AT THE SMALL DOCK WHERE I HAD LEFT MY CAR, I DROVE TO A RAMSHACKLE GAS-STATION TO FILL MY TANK.... AND THERE...."

GREAT SCOTT! THAT NEWSPAPER... IT'S GOT **MY PICTURE!**

OHH--- **NO!**

FINAL MIAMI DAILY HERAL

SEEK PHILIP WENTW IN FATHER'S MURDE

POLICE SUSPECT SON OF WEALTHY BROKER

ROY G. WILLIAMS

1

Forbidden Worlds #5, March – April 1952. Pencils: Al Williamson; inks: Roy Krenkel. ACG.

"HORRIFIED, I READ ON....TO LEARN THAT I WAS SUSPECTED BECAUSE MY FATHER HAD LEFT ALMOST HIS ENTIRE FORTUNE TO ME, WITH ONLY A PITTANCE TO MY BROTHER RALPH..... AND BECAUSE I SEEMED TO BE HIDING OUT, A FUGITIVE FROM JUSTICE!"

BUT...BUT I TOLD EILEEN WHERE I WAS GOING....WHY DIDN'T **SHE** TELL THE POLICE? MAYBE **SHE** BELIEVES I CAME BACK SECRETLY TO COMMIT THE MURDER.... MAYBE SHE.... SHE WON'T EVEN WANT TO MARRY ME NOW!

"I GUESS I LOST MY HEAD THEN! I FORGOT ALL ABOUT MY PILLS! THERE WAS ONLY ONE THOUGHT IN MY FEVERED BRAIN....."

I...I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO MIAMI.... AND CLEAR MY NAME WITH THE POLICE AND EILEEN! THAT'S ALL THAT MATTERS NOW!

THE...THE WORLD'S GONE **CRAZY**...AS IF IT'S ALL BECOME A MADMAN'S NIGHTMARE! OR IS.... IS IT **ME** WHO'S CRAZY?

"FRANTIC TO LIFT THE MISTS OF SUSPICION FROM MY NAME, I SOON FOUND MYSELF COPING WITH **ANOTHER** KIND OF MIST...ONE THAT ROSE WITH EERIE, CLAMMY FINGERS FROM ALL SIDES, SURROUNDING ME, CLUTCHING AT ME!"

EVERYTHING'S BECOMING HAZY, **UNREAL**! IT... IT MUST BE MY FEVER.....

"AND THEN, ON THE DIZZYING BORDERLINE BETWEEN REALITY AND DELIRIUM....."

"SUDDENLY I FELT MYSELF BEING WRENCHED INTO A WHIRLING, SPIRALLING VORTEX! EXCRUCIATING PAIN SEARED THROUGH ME, AS IF EVERY ATOM OF MY BODY WERE BEING REARRANGED INTO SOME FANTASTIC PATTERN! BLINDED, TERRIFIED, I SLAMMED ON THE BRAKES!"

SCREECH!

"THE CAR SCREECHED TO A HALT..... AND WHEN I LOOKED UP DAZEDLY..."

OHH...A..A **GHOST!**

HUH... ME?

BEWILDERED, I LOOKED DOWN AT MYSELF...AND GASPED IN HORROR!

YE GODS! I-I'M TRANSPARENT!

"WAS THIS SOME INSANE HALLUCINATION, BROUGHT ON BY THE FEVER? STUNNED, I STEPPED OUT OF THE CAR... AND SEEMED TO FLOAT WEIGHTLESSLY DOWN! AND THEN, AS I NEARED A LOW-HANGING BRANCH, I KNEW THE AWFUL TRUTH.....!"

IT WENT RIGHT THROUGH ME... AND I FELT NOTHING AT ALL! I-I'M BODILESS!

YOU SEEM TO BE FLESH AND BLOOD...MAYBE YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT'S HAPPENED! WHERE AM I...AND WHY ARE YOU WEARING CLOTHES LIKE THAT?

BECAUSE THESE WERE THE CLOTHES I WAS WEARING **WHEN I DIED!**

YOU-YOU MEAN...THIS IS THE SPIRIT WORLD?

YES, BUT ONLY FOR THOSE WHO **WILLINGLY** LOST THEIR LIVES AT SOME TIME! IT'S ALL IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ANCIENT BIBLICAL PROPHECY THAT HE WHO LOSETH HIS LIFE SHALL FIND IT! BUT...BUT WHAT ARE **YOU** DOING HERE...WHY ARE YOU SO..SO **GHOSTLY?**

"IT WAS THEN THAT THE FIRST FAINT GLIMMER OF UNDERSTANDING DAWNED HORRIBLY IN MY MIND!"

I-I SEE NOW THAT THIS **ISN'T** A HALLUCINATION BROUGHT ON BY MY FEVER! I'M DIFFERENT FROM YOU BECAUSE I'M **NOT** REALLY DEAD, BECAUSE I DON'T REALLY BELONG IN THIS SPIRIT WORLD! AND JUST AS SPIRITS ARE TRANSPARENT AND GHOSTLY WHEN THEY STUMBLE INTO THE REAL WORLD OF THE LIVING, SO LIVING HUMANS APPEAR TO BE SHADOWY IN THE SPIRIT WORLD! BUT HOW...HOW DID **I** STUMBLE INTO THIS WORLD?

I REMEMBER HEARING OF OTHERS LIKE YOU WHO BLUNDERED INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD! THEY WERE IN THE GRIP OF DELIRIUM OR RAGING FEVERS.....SO I THINK I CAN EXPLAIN **YOUR** PRESENCE HERE! THE SPIRIT WORLD AND THE REAL WORLD INTERSECT AT SOME POINTS, BUT NO ONE IN THE REAL WORLD CAN RECOGNIZE THE POINT OF INTERSECTION! NO ONE EXCEPT THOSE IN THE GRIP OF DELIRIUM OR FEVER, WHO ARE MENTALLY ATTUNED TO THE UNREAL WORLD AROUND THEM, AND SO ARE DRAWN RIGHT INTO THE SPIRIT WORLD!

"JUST THEN..."

OHHH.... PIRATES!

THERE'S ANOTHER HOSTAGE, ME LADS! SEIZE HER!

THEY....THEY'RE AS TERRIBLE IN DEATH AS THEY WERE IN LIFE...AND SINCE THEY HAVE NO NEED FOR MONEY ANYMORE, THEY GO AROUND SEEKING HOSTAGES ONLY TO **KILL** THEM!

WELL, THEY CAN'T KILL **ME!** THEY CAN'T DO ANYTHING TO A BODILESS SPIRIT.... BUT THERE'S PLENTY I CAN DO TO ***THEM!***

THE-THE BULLETS GO RIGHT ***THROUGH*** 'IM...THERE'S NO WAY OF STOPPIN' 'IM!

BANG!

A...A GHOST!

AYE.... BUT BULLETS STOP ***YOU!***

RUN FOR YER LIVES!

BANG

JUST THINK...DEAD SPIRITS RUNNING FROM A **LIVE GHOST!**

THIS PART OF THE SPIRIT WORLD NEAR THE FLORIDA KEYS IS INFESTED WITH PIRATES AND BRIGANDS WHO WILLINGLY GAMBLED THEIR LIVES IN THEIR NEFARIOUS ADVENTURES..AND LOST THEIR GAMBLES! AND THEY'VE BEEN SLOWLY WIPING OUT THE COMMUNITY OF GOOD SOULS WHO GAVE THEIR LIVES IN JUST CAUSES! BUT NOW THAT WE HAVE ***YOU*** ON OUR SIDE, GOOD WILL TRIUMPH OVER EVIL!

BUT I CAN'T STAY **HERE**.... EVEN THOUGH I'D LIKE TO HELP YOU! I DON'T BELONG IN YOUR WORLD...I'VE GOT TO GET BACK TO MINE! AND BESIDES, YOU'RE ALREADY DEAD.... YOU CAN'T BE KILLED AGAIN IN THE SPIRIT WORLD, EVEN BY PIRATES!

BUT SPIRITS **CAN** DIE AGAIN! AND IF WE DIE IN THE SPIRIT WORLD, THERE'S NO OTHER WORLD FOR US TO GO TO...WE'RE **REALLY** DEAD THEN.... FOR ETERNITY!

I WAS HOPING YOU'D STAY HERE...NOT ONLY BECAUSE YOU COULD HELP US SO MUCH, BUT BECAUSE I'M AFRAID I'D **MISS** YOU IF YOU WENT!

I CAN'T RESIST YOU WHEN YOU LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT! ALL RIGHT...I'LL STAY AND HELP! IT SHOULDN'T TAKE TOO LONG TO GET RID OF THE PIRATES WITH MY GHOSTLY POWERS!

"MAUREEN.....THAT WAS THE GIRL'S NAME... TOOK ME TO A MEETING OF THE GOOD SPIRITS, AND THERE....."

AYE, THE PIRATES HAVE THEIR HEADQUARTERS IN THE OLD FORT AT POINT LAGOS ...AND THEY STORE ALL THEIR ARMS AND AMMUNITION IN THE GREAT UNDERGROUND CELLAR THERE!

GOOD! THAT'S ALL I NEED TO KNOW!

"LATER..."

BEING BODILESS CERTAINLY HAS ITS COMPENSATIONS....LIKE BEING ABLE TO WALK RIGHT THROUGH STONE WALLS!

WE'VE GOT TO FIGGER **SOME** WAY O' GETTIN' RID O' THAT GHOST.....

YOU'RE **TOO LATE**, BOYS!

"I CAME THROUGH IT ALL UNSCATHED, OF COURSE...THE EXPLOSION COULDN'T HURT MY BODY WHEN I DIDN'T **HAVE** ANY! THEN...."

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED, FOLKS.... THOSE PIRATES WILL NEVER BOTHER ANYONE AGAIN **IN ANY** WORLD! AND NOW.....I'LL BE TAKING OFF FOR **MY** WORLD!

OH...**NO!** YOU.. YOU **CAN'T** GO!

BOOM!

THIS WORLD WILL SEEM EMPTY WITHOUT YOU, PHILIP! PLEASE STAY... ...FOR ME!

YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL, MAUREEN....IF I WEREN'T ENGAGED TO A GIRL BACK IN MY WORLD, I'D PROBABLY FALL IN LOVE WITH YOU! BUT I'VE GOT TOO MANY TIES TO MY OWN WORLD...AND BESIDES, I COULD NEVER REALLY BE HAPPY HERE AS A BODILESS SPIRIT! I **MUST** LEAVE YOU...MUCH AS I HATE TO!

"BACK AT THE SPOT WHERE I'D LEFT MY CAR..."

THE ENGINE WASN'T HURT WHEN I BLUNDERED INTO THIS WORLD....AND I THINK I KNOW HOW TO GET **OUT** OF IT!

APPARENTLY THIS SPIRIT WORLD DOESN'T HAVE ANY DISEASES, BECAUSE MY FEVER HASN'T BOTHERED ME HERE...SO I'LL HAVE TO USE A DIFFERENT METHOD TO GET OUT OF HERE! ACCORDING TO ALL THE OLD LEGENDS, THE SUREST WAY TO GET BACK TO YOUR ORIGINAL DIMENSION IS TO **WISH** HARD ENOUGH TO DO SO! AND I'VE GOT PLENTY OF REASONS FOR WANTING TO GET BACK.... TO EILEEN, TO A WORLD WHERE I WAS LOVED AND HAPPY AND WEALTHY.....

"AND WHEN I REACHED THE POINT WHERE I HAD ORIGINALLY ENTERED THE SPIRIT WORLD--SUDDENLY, THE WHIRLING, SPIRALLING VORTEX AGAIN!"

I-I'M BACK...IN THE **WORLD OF THE LIVING!**

EAT AT HAQUE'S

NOW TO GET TO DAD'S PENTHOUSE IN MIAMI! RALPH OUGHT TO BE HOME, AND I'LL BE ABLE TO CALL EILEEN FROM THERE! BUT I'D BETTER HURRY....I'M BEGINNING TO FEEL THE FEVER CREEPING UP ON ME AGAIN!

AWARE THAT THE POLICE MIGHT BE WATCHING THE HOUSE FOR MY RETURN, I STOLE UP TO THE PENT-HOUSE IN THE SERVICE ELEV-ATOR... AND THERE, OUTSIDE THE WENTWORTH APARTMENT..."

OH, RALPH—IT'S SO WONDERFUL BEING IN YOUR ARMS AGAIN! I WAS GETTING SO TIRED OF PLAYING UP TO THAT STUPID BROTHER OF YOURS, PRETENDING I LOVED HIM!

WELL, THAT'S ALL OVER WITH NOW, EILEEN! I'VE LEFT ENOUGH CLUES TO IMPLICATE HIM IN FATHER'S DEATH— SO THAT IF PHIL EVER **DOES** RETURN, HE'S SURE TO BE CONVICTED OF THE MURDER **I** COMMITTED! AND ***WE'LL*** HAVE ALL THE WENTWORTH DOUGH!

PHIL!

SO, ***THIS*** IS THE KIND OF WORLD I WANTED SO DESPERATELY TO COME BACK TO..A WORLD IN WHICH I WAS BETRAYED BY MY BROTHER AND SWEET-HEART! I-I SHOULD HAVE **STAYED** IN THAT SPIRIT WORLD!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT SPIRIT WORLD YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT...BUT YOU'RE SURE GOING **BACK** TO IT! AFTER I SHOOT YOU, I CAN TELL THE COPS YOU CAME HERE THREATENING TO KILL ME..AND EILEEN WILL TESTIFY THAT I ACTED ONLY IN SELF-DEFENSE!

RALPH.... ***L-LOOK!***

MAUREEN!

IT....IT'S A **GHOST!** GET OUT OF THE WAY, EILEEN...I'M GOING TO SHOOT!

THE—THE SHOTS WENT RIGHT **THROUGH** HER!

OHHHHH!

BANG!

BANG!

NOW YOU HAVE ***TWO*** MURDERS ON YOUR CONSCIENCE...AND FOR THAT, YOU MUST **DIE!**

NO..NO...GET AWAY FROM ME!

AAAAAGHHHHH!

YAAA!

I-I HAD TO HIDE IN YOUR CAR AND COME WITH YOU, PHILIP! I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU IN THE SPIRIT WORLD AND COULDN'T BEAR TO LOSE YOU! BUT I FORGOT THAT IN YOUR REAL WORLD, I WOULD BE GHOSTLY AND BODILESS!

NEVER MIND, MAUREEN..I KNOW HOW TO TAKE CARE OF THAT! THERE'S NOTHING LEFT FOR ME HERE...I KNOW WHERE MY HAPPINESS LIES NOW..IN **YOUR** WORLD! BUT WE'LL HAVE TO HURRY :...MY FEVER IS GETTING STRONGER!

"BACK ON THE ROAD OUT OF MIAMI—"

ALL RIGHT, PHIL...I'VE GOT THE PAD AND PENCIL FROM YOUR GLOVE COMPARTMENT...BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT ME TO WRITE?.

THIS.."TO THE EDITOR OF **'FORBIDDEN WORLDS'**... THIS IS ONE LETTER THAT'S **REALLY** OUT OF THIS WORLD BECAUSE IT'S BEING WRITTEN BY A **GHOST!**...."

NOW DON'T FORGET, SON... JUST DROP THAT ENVELOPE INTO THE FIRST MAILBOX YOU COME TO! AND THAT TEN DOLLARS IS FOR **YOU!**

Y...YESSIR! I...I'D DO IT FOR YA FOR **NOTHIN'**.....NOW THAT I'VE SEEN MY FUST, HONEST-TO-GOODNESS **GHOST!**

MY....MY FEVER....IT'S MAKING EVERYTHING MISTY AND UNREAL AGAIN! WE MUST BE CLOSE TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE TWO WORLDS, MAUREEN....AND I KNOW JUST WHAT TO DO! I'M GOING TO CRASH THE CAR INTO A TREE RIGHT ON THE BORDERLINE OF THE SPIRIT WORLD...SO THAT WHEN THE CAR CARRIES US OVER THE BOUNDARY, WE'LL **BOTH** BE FULL-BODIED SPIRITS!

I-I UNDERSTAND, DARLING! AND THEN WE'LL BE TOGETHER..**FOR ETERNITY!**

CRASH!

THE END-

BLACK KNIGHTS of EVIL!

WHEN YOUNG MEN FRATERNIZE WITH THE CREATURES OF THE *NETHER WORLD*, THEIR EYES OFTEN BEHOLD SUCH SIGHTS OF *EVIL* THAT THE DELICATE TISSUES OF THEIR BRAINS SNAP AND THEY BECOME...

IN A SMALL NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE WHOSE CAMPUS STRETCHED INTO THE BEGINNINGS OF A DARK, EERIE FOREST, THERE EXISTED A SECRET ORDER...

...AND I SEE NO REASON WHY I CAN'T BE ELECTED TO YOUR CLUB.

AW, YOU'RE AFRAID OF YOUR OWN SHADOW, CHAUNCEY!

YOU HAVE NO BACKBONE! GO ON OUT AND TOUGHEN UP...THEN COME BACK!

RIDERS OF THE NIGHT

GEE, IT'S BEEN DEAD AROUND HERE LATELY! LET'S FIND SOMETHING EXCITING TO DO...

YEAH! SAY I HAVE AN IDEA! LET'S SCARE THE PANTS OFF THAT SISSY, CHAUNCEY ASHWORTH...

Chamber of Chills Magazine #6, March 1952. Art: Joe Certa. Harvey Comics.

GOOD IDEA! HE WANTS TO GET INTO THE CLUB ANYWAY! LET'S GIVE HIM AN INITIATION...

...AND THEN TELL HIM HE DIDN'T PASS! HEY, CHAUNCEY! C'MERE!

HI, FELLOWS...

...AND SO WE'RE GOING TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO JOIN...

YOU MUST BE AT DEVIL'S WELL AT MIDNIGHT, SHARP!

IF YOU DON'T GET THERE EXACTLY ON TIME YOU'RE BLACKBALLED...

WE'LL GIVE HIM A SCARE HE WON'T FORGET...

YEAH, BUT WE BETTER GET TO DEVIL'S WELL AND MAKE SOME PREPARATIONS!

I'LL GET THE SHEETS: YOU GUYS BRING THE BOOKS AND OTHER JUNK...

LITTLE DID CHAUNCEY KNOW THAT WHILE HUMANS SLEPT, *REAL, DAMNED, TORMENTED DEMONS* HELD *CONCLAVE* IN THE *DEPTHS* OF *HELL*...

WHOOOOOOO!?!

OH! WHAT WAS THAT... I...I GUESS IT'S ONLY AN OWL...

CHAUNCEY ASHWORTH, I HAVE COME TO LEAD YOU TO YOUR MEETING WITH THE *EVIL SPIRITS* OF THE FOREST...

I KNOW IT'S ONLY THE CLUB MEMBERS... BUT I'M SCARED ANYWAY...

FOLLOOOW MEEEE!!

WOOOOOOOOO

EEEEEEEEE

AIEEEEEE

DEEPER, DEEPER INTO THE BLACK FOREST, CHAUNCEY FOLLOWS THE *SHROUDED* FIGURE UNTIL HE REACHES THE *WELL* FROM WHICH, IT IS SAID, *SATAN* ONCE SPRUNG...

DEVIL'S WELL!! TH-THAT MUST BE THE HUT OVER THERE...

ENTER, NEOPHYTE, INTO THE DEN OF EVIL...

STAND BEFORE US AND BARE YOUR SOUL SO THAT SATAN MAY ENTER INTO YOU...

THEY CAN'T SCARE ME NOW.. I RECOGNIZE THEIR VOICES..

YOU ARE ABOUT TO BE INITIATED INTO THE SECRET SOCIETY OF THE RIDERS OF THE NIGHT... IF THE SPIRIT WHO WATCHES, APPROVES, HE WILL APPEAR...

NECROPO! TAN JERINESA NIKOLA PEESE! TOMA LIPY TOMA RO!

AS THE MAGIC WORDS OF THE ANCIENT *BLACK ART* WERE UTTERED, A SOUND AS OF DISTANT RUMBLE OF THUNDER WAS HEARD! THEN...

IT...IT *WORKED!* A...A SPIRIT REALLY CAME...

L-LET'S GET OUT OF HERE...

HA!HA! THAT WAS PRETTY GOOD. I WONDER HOW THEY DID IT?

DEFILE THE NAME OF THE *RULERS* OF *EVIL*, WOULD YOU!!

NO! *HELP ME... OHHHHHH!!!*

THIS...THIS IS TOO *REAL!* MAY...MAYBE IT'S *NOT* A GAG...

S-STOP-- UH-UH-- ARRRGHH!!

YIIIII!!

THEY...THEY'RE REALLY BE... BEING *KILLED*... I...I MUST BE GOING *CRAZY!*

HAHA HA HA HA HA HA HAHA

HAHAHAHA

THE APPARITION HAD CAUSED THE YOUTH'S MIND TO SNAP AS A TWIG IN A GRAVEYARD IS SNAPPED BY THE SEARCHING FOOT OF A *HUNGRY GHOUL*...

HEHEHEHEHE!! **HAHA**HAHA!!

ALL RIGHT, YOUNG MAN, TELL US WHERE YOUR FRIENDS ARE...

SPEAK UP, SON, WHAT HAPPENED TO THEM...

UHHH! IT...IT'S HORRIBLE...

I...I CAN'T BELIEVE YOUNG ASHWORTH DID THIS...

WHO ELSE COULD HAVE??..

COME ON, BOY! WE DON'T WANT TO PUT YOU IN A JACKET...

HA HA HA!! NOW I'M INITIATED!..*NOW I'M INITIATED!!*

THE END.

"THE MAN WHO IMAGINED A MONSTER!"

WHAT IS REAL, AND WHAT IS NOT? IF THE MINDS OF MEN **BELIEVE** A THING IS TRUE, DOES IT **BECOME** TRUE? PERHAPS IT'S BETTER NOT TO MEDDLE WITH THE UNKNOWN, AFTER ALL, OR YOU MIGHT FIND YOURSELF TRAPPED, LIKE **THE MAN WHO IMAGINED A MONSTER !!**

BUT YOU CAN'T BE REAL! I **IMAGINED** YOU MYSELF!

WARREN WINDELL, THE FAMOUS RADIO NEWSCASTER, DINES WITH TWO FRIENDS...

MY AUDIENCE WILL BELIEVE **ANYTHING** I SAY, I TELL YOU! IF I TELL THEM THERE'S A MONSTER IN ZOO PARK, THEY'LL SWALLOW IT. WANT TO BET A THOUSAND, SMITH?

I DON'T LIKE IT, WINDELL.

DON'T DO IT, WARREN. IT'S DANGEROUS!

HOW DO YOU MEAN AHMED?

MANY OF OUR ANCIENT RELIGIONS TEACH THAT IF A MAN BELIEVES A THING IS SO, IT **IS** SO. IF A MILLION PEOPLE BELIEVE THERE IS A MONSTER IN ZOO PARK...

IT MIGHT COME TRUE? BOSH! AND TO PROVE IT I'M GOING TO CREATE A MONSTER IN MY OWN IMAGINATION AND TELL THEM ABOUT IT... AND THEY'LL BELIEVE IT! HA HA HA HA!!

Tales of Horror #4, January 1953. Art: Ernest Schroeder. Toby.

AND SO, LATER THAT NIGHT....

...UNCONFIRMED REPORT OF MONSTER IN ZOO PARK, REPORTED AS HUMANOID, TWO FEET TALL WITH HEAD OF FROG AND TENTACLES INSTEAD OF ARMS. IT IS THOUGHT TO BE DANGEROUS. A WOMAN, DRIVING THROUGH THE PARK...

FANTASTIC! BUT IF WINDELL SAYS SO...

HE'S ALWAYS RIGHT, AFTER ALL!

IF WINDELL SAYS SO I BELIEVE IT!

THERE'S A MONSTER IN ZOO PARK!

BY THE TIME THE LATE PAPERS HIT THE STREET, THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE BELIEVED IN THE MONSTER!

MONSTER IN THE PARK!

I HEARD IT WAS FIVE FEET HIGH!

IS THAT WHAT WINDELL SAID?

AND IN THE CITY ROOM OF A BIG DAILY...

HERE WE GO! WANNA BET SOMEBODY'S SEEN THE MONSTER?

NO BET. WE'LL HAVE A HUNDRED CALLS BEFORE MORNING!

THIS IS JIM MILLIGAN, A GUARD AT THE ZOO. I SEEN THE MONSTER!!

THAT SO? WHAT DID HE LOOK LIKE?

"JUST LIKE WINDELL SAID, HE LOOKS! I WAS GOING BY THE BIG CAT'S CAGE AND..."

..."AND THEN I SAW HIM, TENTACLES AND FROG'S HEAD AND ALL! MAN, DID I RUN! I'M LOCKED IN THE OFFICE NOW, SEND SOME COPS TO GET ME OUT, WILL YA?"

HMMPH! SOMETHIN' MAKIN' THE CATS RESTLESS! BETTER CHECK!

EEEE YOWWWWWW!

NEXT MORNING IN WINDELL'S OFFICE ...

WARREN, YOU MUST DENY THIS STORY! LOOK AT THIS HEADLINE.! "SIX FOOT MONSTER ATTACKS ZOO GUARD!"

THAT GUARD JUST HAD AN OVERACTIVE IMAGINATION!

IF PEOPLE BELIEVE ANYTHING YOU SAY, WARREN...

...WHY NOT TELL THEM IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE, AND END THIS NONSENSE, THEN?

THAT, THEY WON'T BELIEVE. THEY'D THINK I WAS LYING TO CALM THEM. BUT DON'T WORRY. THE WHOLE THING WILL PETER OUT IN A COUPLE OF DAYS...

BUT THAT NIGHT OUTSIDE THE ZOO...

HELP! HELP! THE MONSTER! IT KILLED JERRY!

EASY, EASY, BUDDY! TELL ME ALL ABOUT IT!

WE BEEN WORKING IN PAIRS SINCE THIS MONSTER BUSINESS, JERRY AND ME WERE WALKING ALONG....

YOU REALLY BELIEVE IN THIS MONSTER BALONEY?

I--I DON'T KNOW, JERRY...

WHEN ALL OF A SUDDEN....

AAAA AAAKK KKKK!

I...I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING! THE MONSTER WAS BIG...TOO BIG! I... I JUST RAN!

NEXT DAY IN WINDELL'S OFFICE....

IT'S TERRIBLE, WARREN! ONE GUARD MISSING, THE REST REFUSE TO WORK, THE ANIMALS ARE STARVING...

AND NOW THEY BELIEVE THE MONSTER IS EIGHT FEET TALL!

ALRIGHT, ALRIGHT, YOU CRY BABIES! I'LL TELL YOU WHAT I'LL DO. I'LL PROVE THAT THERE'S NO MONSTER! AFTER ALL, I CREATED HIM... HA HA HA!

AND THAT AFTERNOON, HEADLINES SCREAMED THE STARTLING NEWS...

AND SO AT MIDNIGHT...

IT'S SILLY TO CARRY THIS WIRE RECORDER, SMITH. NOTHING'S GOING TO HAPPEN!
WARREN, I BEG YOU NOT TO GO!
TAKE IT, WARREN. IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO PLAY BACK YEARS FROM NOW.
MIDNIGHT, MR. WINDELL

SEE YOU ON THE OTHER SIDE IN HALF AN HOUR!
THE MIKE WILL PICK UP WHAT YOU HAVE TO SAY, TALK AS YOU WALK ALONG.
A BRAVE MAN.. BUT A FOOL TO MEDDLE WITH THE UNKNOW!

TEN MINUTES LATER...

NO! NOOO! YOU CAN'T BE REAL I IMAGINED YOU MYSELF!
TRUE! BUT A MILLION PEOPLE BELIEVE IN ME, WINDELL ...AND THEIR BELIEF GIVES ME LIFE AND GROWTH!

YOU... YOU CAN'T KILL ME! I CREATED YOU.. YOU MIGHT DIE TOO!

I KNOW WHAT YOU INTEND TO DO. YOU'RE GOING TO TELL PEOPLE I DON'T EXIST. BUT THAT CAN ONLY MAKE ME GROW SMALLER.

BUT AFTER ALL, AS SOON AS I SHOW MYSELF TO SOMEONE, PEOPLE WILL BEGIN TO BELIEVE IN ME ALL OVER AGAIN! YOU CAN'T HURT ME WINDELL

I...I..

AND THE MORE PEOPLE THAT BELIEVE, THE MORE I SHALL GROW, AND GROW AND GROW, BUT BEST OF ALL, WINDELL, IS THE FACT THAT...

MEANWHILE, A HUGE CROWD WAITS AT THE OTHERSIDE OF THE PARK...

IT'S OVER HALF AN HOUR! I'M BEGINNING TO WORRY!

I TOLD HIM NOT TO...

LOOK! HERE HE COMES.

HERE, MR. WINDELL! SPEAK RIGHT INTO THE MICROPHONE, PLEASE!

HE MADE IT. NOTHING HAPPENED AFTER ALL!

NO? LOOK AT HIS FACE! COME ON, HE NEEDS HELP!

I REPEAT. THERE IS NO MONSTER IN THE PARK! THERE IS NO MONSTER!

HOORAY! I TOLD YOU WINDELL WOULD FIND OUT!

ATTABOY, WINDELL! WE BELIEVE YOU!

TA-TAKE ME HOME, WILL YOU ?

SURE, WARREN... RIGHT AWAY!

A FEW MINUTES LATER...

TELL US ABOUT IT WARREN WHAT HAP...?

NO! NO, I'M SORRY, BUT IT'S BETTER IF I DON'T. YOU BOTH BEEN KIND BUT..

...I THINK I'LL.. LIE DOWN FOR AWHILE. GOOD-BYE!

GOODBYE! WHAT CAN HAVE HAPPENED...?

LOOK AHMED... THE RECORDER. MAYBE WE CAN FIND OUT!

A MOMENT LATER...

WELL, FOR THE SAKE OF THE RECORD. I'M NOW AT THE CAGES OF BIG CATS. THEY...

BANG

A SHOT! FROM WARREN'S ROOM!

AT THAT MOMENT, AS TWO GUARD RETURN TO WORK AT THE ZOO...

HEY! WHAT'S THAT GURGLING SOUND?

HARRY! SHINE YOUR LIGHT OVER HERE!

IT... IT'S THE MONSTER!

BUT HE... HE MUSTA SHRUNK OR SOMETHING! AND WHAT'S HE DOING?

HE...HE'S DISAPPEARIN', RIGHT IN FRONT OF OUR EYES!

WE MUST BE DREAMING, HARRY!

LEMME OUTA HERE! I QUIT! LEMME OUT!

WAIT, HARRY! IT MUSTA BEEN ONE OF THEM OPTICAL ILLUSIONS!

AND IN WINDELL'S HOME...

POOR WARREN. WHY WOULD HE KILL HIMSELF?

SMITH! WE LEFT THE RECORDER ON, AND... LISTEN!

I SHALL GROW, AND GROW, BUT BEST OF ALL, WINDELL, IS THE FACT THAT AS LONG AS YOU LIVE...

...I SHALL LIVE! BECAUSE YOU, OF ALL MEN MUST BELIEVE IN ME! HA HA HA! GO NOW WINDELL... AND A LONG LIFE TO YOU HA HA!

GOOD HEAVENS! THE THING WAS REAL!

WARREN CONVINCED EVERYONE THAT THERE WAS NO MONSTER... EVERYONE BUT HIMSELF.

THEN HE SHOT HIMSELF BECAUSE...

OF COURSE! HE WAS THE ONLY ONE LEFT WHOSE BELIEF WAS KEEPING THE MONSTER ALIVE, SO HE DESTROY HIMSELF TO RID THE WORLD OF IT.

BUT... BUT AHMED!

NOW WE BELIEVE IN IT! SUPPOSE...?

DON'T SAY IT, YOU FOOL! DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT IT!

THE END

Tyrant Lizard Kings
EMPIRE